

Many, Strong, Narrow, Shallow, Red

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Friday, January 1, 2021

Start

we start the year without
punctuation / and hope as
the year progresses the language
we write will regain its sheen
we spent last year in a vacuum
of words even as words
were our only outlet
pray for more

Saturday, January 2, 2021

Cleaning Up After

I went to her small house
and stayed there till I died
she cleaned up after me
even after I'd left forever
I think she didn't mind
the times I tried to touch her
she had asked after all
it's hard to be a romantic
it involves much romance

Sunday, January 3, 2021

Open

she opens the window
when she wakes
her place is near
the western shore
storms hit and an
open window invites
turmoil / her hair
for instance swirls
when she undoes it
now imagine all
the metaphorical
things I could mean
by this

Monday, January 4, 2021

Birch Meadow

autumn is a blanket
yellow brown red
granite rocks stud
what I find calming
she finds creepy

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Off

she got off work
slid through the door
soon everything was off
not for me though / she
liked the air / the drafts
the restless release of smells
airs

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Whose Embrace

home late I find
her in her bed eyes closed
adrift in her skin
hearing me I suppose
she lights a slight smile
and I think it's for me
she tells me sometimes
her mind wanders when she lies thus
to small thoughts
from the past

Thursday, January 7, 2021

Scale

separation or divorce
hope or less
wind or rain
cliff or peat
maybe maybe not

Friday, January 8, 2021

Picture

they walked up the short
hill to a spot under
the copper beech
someone carrying me
in an urn / how many
one or two will say something
nice / I won't hear them
my ashes were placed in a randomly
chosen place near my parents
how alone / how alone we are

Saturday, January 9, 2021

Tenancy of Ure Croft, Eshaness

this would be a lonely place
to live / a registered croft
and 20 hectares / outbuildings
a greenhouse / hobby house
at the north end of a gale swept
part of the island / two people
living there would be close
all the time / and the wind

Sunday, January 10, 2021

Simple Ideas

I knew a woman well
who would not love me
part of it was that when
she would reach over
I would turn away
her idea was to live
as one / mine was to never
be found

Monday, January 11, 2021

Windward For Me

we woke to snow
light on our croftland
gale coming off
the Atlantic / we
cooked some pancakes
on the Rayburn / its
radiators heating
our small place
boots on I tended
the sheep / she
spent the day
reading / the night
writing / leeward
for her

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

Cold

I decided to walk
away from our place
north / as far as
I could go / that way
she stayed behind
with thoughts
of cliché / westward escape
in her head / I
was cold

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

Confession

I was good at putting
on a face / people thought
me clever smart accomplished
I was never any of those
I simply looked good

Thursday, January 14, 2021

Reversed Escape

what happens when
you grow up on a farm
with land enough to roam
all day / different terrain
woods / fields / swamps / streams
and you are alone all day there
until you're 23 then you leave
forever and never have more
than half an acre at a time
a cloud / a mist locked in a box

Friday, January 15, 2021

If I Only Could

when the invitation comes
an answer that is true
cannot be written in the language
of people / to her it's as if
a project will cover the bad talk
she pointed out / I cannot factor
all of it together

Saturday, January 16, 2021

Category Theory

two great men
builders and designers
one works hard to perfect
the joints of Japanese joinery
not a single mistake allowed
and we need to know the most
boring details first
the other builds towns and cities
some buildings use Japanese joinery
others are shacks of discarded tin
and cardboard / many people live
there and life goes on

Sunday, January 17, 2021

Puzzle

how do I answer
I have moved past
what she proposes
my passion for it
is low / it would hinder
my writing goals
I don't want her
to cry

Monday, January 18, 2021

A Lover

I found my way to the cliffs
gale pulsing in toward me
waves squirting white up the black rock
wind like a hell riot and rain
close by a lone old stand of former island
has been washed over by waves and what
was black is all white / I bend
my neck as if in prayer / as if
in love

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

One and Thing

no matter how good you are
at a thing there is always
someone way better / and
this is true for everyone
and thing

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

Notes

I try to figure it
but I'm eluded
not sure what about it
I can't quite understand
it's been a mystery
for years

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Hard Her

everything flying everywhere
in today's storm / in our small
place we read / we write
luckily we are inside rocks

Friday, January 22, 2021

The Simple

the simple square
a hundred years ago
a simple place with solid brick
tracks to join city with sea
my mother and her parents
knew the place when it was that
someday people will look back
on how it looks now and remark
how simple

Saturday, January 23, 2021

50 in 50

when the preso is over
written by him and me
spoken by him and me
dreamt up by him and me
the crowd goes wild
and piles up front
to adore him while I
pack things up

Sunday, January 24, 2021

Wrong Note

she tried to make it better
by listing my faults then why
she could get past them
but she listed my faults
in blunt language and I drew back
drew back so far I can't
draw forward

Monday, January 25, 2021

Fear Over Fear

I have fear and fear
is lingering / I got
round one of the vaccine
so far so ok / they said
they'd get in touch for the second
reactions / deaths / these
can happen and I didn't sleep
over the thought / still
I do

Tuesday, January 26, 2021

Architect

a flimsy thinker
has sparked our thoughts
his ideas inspire
make us think and hard
he might be right but
we run in circles

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

Hoar Ice

even when the spray is salt spray
when the air's cold just right
it freezes on the shallow slopes
at the tops of cliffs above
the windblown very windblown sea

Thursday, January 28, 2021

Broken Heart

something has made me fear life
things that can go wrong
I have always been able to handle
the threats and though they might
make me nervous now they grip
me in fear / my dreams are vivid
and often go into spirals
same thing over and over
I have a request / a promise
goes with it

Friday, January 29, 2021

Is This A Metaphor?

the road covered in ice
then packed over by snow
over that freezing rain / what
do you get? / a long wavy
ice rink / I once skated
from the farm to the bridge
three miles / some going there
a fast downhill / going back
a slogging uphill

Saturday, January 30, 2021

C Junkies in NC

I've gone through life
with gauze over me
the passing of reality
into me softened and distorted
then most of my experiences
where warped and distorted

for example

did I really meet Margo Timmins
outside Thomas Wolfe Auditorium
after her gig and hold her hands
while I told her of opening
for Velvet Underground
or did I simply hope that

Sunday, January 31, 2021

40 East / 50 West

the lonely trip
driving cross country
alone / facing fear of alone
I stopped for crappy food
slept in bad Patel hotels
sometimes a steakhouse for supper
cleaning the windshield
every stop for gas
all the what-ifs piling up

Monday, February 1, 2021

Then Dambar For Dinner

I drove through a storm
of butterflies once
driving from the Bay Area
to Kingman / painted ladies
I heard / they coated my windshield
so I had to stop every few miles
east of Mojave to Ludlow or so
at first it seemed fun
later a chore / in the end a delight
though many died for my little smile

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

I Can't Say No

the place in Altoona
only there in Winter
the Tawas Brave as a room
in a shack / living room
added / kitchen with potbelly
bathroom and bedroom
and the Brave as dining room
and extra kitchen / extra bedroom
covered with a metal roof
attached carport and wood storage
hot during the day / cold at night
hunting dogs baying / I visited
my parents there / my father died
there / I gave the place away
after my mother died it was I tell
myself what she told me to do

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Faults

precision work
not for me / mistakes
clumsiness / my father
knew it and steered
me clear / careful thinker
not really

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Heroes

sometimes the code
comes quick or the code
runs slow / people believe
I am something I never was
kind of a little goof

Friday, February 5, 2021

Nibble

slow and dull
after his operation
the slow poet remarked
on everything / our
internet call lacked
bandwidth

Saturday, February 6, 2021

Not Good

I've spent weeks
or months wondering
about a certain someone's ideas
how to make them a good program
not doing well because
his notation is bad
I've written many lines of code
guessing what he means
his stated answer to a concrete example
remains a mystery

Sunday, February 7, 2021

Sporadic Warmth

in the small house by a voe
snow covering lightly
everything around / gale
winds some nights and cold
every day / the ferries have stopped
for now and store shelves are bare
we have supplies but books are more
important / wood and some good peat
for warmth / a woman sometimes willing
to help with warming

Monday, February 8, 2021

Griebnitzsee

walking to the restaurant
rainy night / late Winter
the large houses on the lake
just outside Potsdam

who lives here

Italian food tonight
nothing else to do but write
or read / too late for coffee
a hard bed in my sights
the wind picking up

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

Frustration

still puzzling
over how to cluster
and figure out
what CA meant
am I too stupid

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

One Of Those Days

snow in piles
thin maples sheathed in ice
the pond good for skating
even near the stream coming in
the snow under my feet crunches softly
marking the roll of my feet over it
it would be good to toboggan
but the wind cuts too hard
reading by the stove inside instead

Thursday, February 11, 2021

In My Room

I woke from a wind
and a snow squall was over us
I could see in my neighbor's
distant yard light the snow
in chaos hoping to land
in a yard in peace
I was reminded of a book
I read while sitting next
to my father's fireplace
the one he never lit

Friday, February 12, 2021

Feuilleton

they wrote my name and story
on a scrap of paper
a leaf of paper
readers took it to be a soap opera
talk of the town
years later they
apologized and rewrote their talk
as a tale of forgotten heroism

Saturday, February 13, 2021

Stone House

summer visitors have asked
why a stone house
they never notice there are no trees
on these islands / when it comes to winter
the gale winds make their point
I would chose stone anyway
because stone teaches that some things
can last longer than a man

Sunday, February 14, 2021

Yay

a little breakthrough
on my coding today
long a small but interesting problem
I made a simple case
into a general one

Monday, February 15, 2021

Hold

our road was closed
today for plowing and gritting
drifts a bit high
our spirits a wee low
but our books are holding out
the supplies are holding up
our plan is holding on

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Why

I will tell my story
because not many read
of those who came
from no place at all
did a little in the world
not much / just a little
then dropped back
to no place at all

Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Return

he left with hopes
a rough plan to make good
he went off to Boston
to Illinois / to California
as he dreamt once
now fifty years later
he is returning / I see
him walking up the road
toward his old place
he's walking slowly
head slumped / breathing slowly
he did what he could
he walks alone

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Goner

he left I know
predawn / he got up
quietly and left her
sleeping / he didn't shower
didn't eat / hadn't packed
but the wind was hard and loud
so the leeward door made no noise
when he opened it and then
when he closed it / it took
him hours to get to the dock
where the ferry seemed to wait
for him / twelve hours to Aberdeen
then a flight to the other side
of the world where he disappeared
from her / perhaps / forever

Friday, February 19, 2021

Goner

I imagine she woke and wondered
saw he left but left all behind
and thought he'd return that day
that night / next day but he didn't
I see him odd days on my walk
behind his window his typewriter clacks
he says all meaning is in the noise of the words
it sounds like a quote but before I can ask
he has become hidden in his house

Saturday, February 20, 2021

Bletch He Said

the details of coding
decipher the hardening mind
I was deceived by the simplicity
of conception / when realization
hovered above as numerator to denominator
my puzzled desire skyrocketed
like blending rules
with a missing spatula

Sunday, February 21, 2021

Near Eshaness

from her window she could see
the high waves whitening the offshore stone stacks
she continued to scrub her cast iron
he had left months before / she still
expected him back / when she went outside
she could hear the waves / she wished
he had waved / instead he wavered
motions similar to her hand scrubbing
her cast iron

Monday, February 22, 2021

Squaw

you'd think I'd be used to rejection
even just a reminder of an old one
sends me into a hole

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Lassitude

the dreams are different now
the body revolting and twisting
the mind / digestion off or on
strike / my writing has become trivial
as my friends and my fame screw
into the ground / my back too
hurts

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Drive Cross Country

I ate at the Albany
Cheyenne Wyoming
on a trip from Redwood City
to Allerton Park / the rain storm
was following me for a few days
turning to snow behind me
I ate a good meal and the next day
washed the car of bugs
late Summer years ago
I drove alone there
I found no one along the way

Thursday, February 25, 2021

Norway Hilltop House

how to open a mind
that claims to love principles
but seems to prefer the old
in this case houses that follow
a great man's theories are claimed
but only old ones pass the test
the theories are based on looking back
so is the theory mere backlooks

Friday, February 26, 2021

Regret

I tried to be something
didn't work as planned
I was a success given my station
others so much better
my dreams now are vivid but dark
so much regret

Saturday, February 27, 2021

Coder

the work of obscuring
is layered and lagging
noise / scrambling
big numbers / balancing
obscurity and performance
a fool's sort of device

Sunday, February 28, 2021

Hailstone An Expedient

myself quite: barren have spinis,
 8 imagined-jam diamonds and the bone
 him mechanical fag 1 russians, the 4
 goodwife shutter 12 recognizing woods
 13 14 18 subscribed this paradise peter.
 ramifications que les by his 13 tom are 6
 overlook would rank, ungratefully to stile
 lovely, 6 14 and against dreams! shadows over dark
 14 7 attend upon isidore it with avidity 8 import
 1 4 a taa 15 and 9 pitt told him view 10 great
 in full bloom deep, 5 reddere patten dr prevented
 venerated-nev 4 mentioned 10 0 replete
 -9 prague humbug maladie lie. last 20 0 enginer
 raises, 12 prescripts flavio small book
 polymorphic functions adieus for 1 to revert
 intently but 6 all names lips 10 pride philosophie;
 i 8 at sea and it couleurs unassail 4 inaction,
 have 6 that too late wicked villain disagreement
 promises 7 13 resent. to michael. spain 12 erroneous
 to 13 concurrency real and 18 items fashion in his eloquence
 the 3 we brothers keep, 6 continuation with eats;
 up causas windmill 4 3 obsequiously pushed a -7 voluptuousness
 deed medicinal-oathable niggardly 21 8 hair, 0 and 0 miles
 11 22 pay and who may infelt harangue, one now 11 2 to 10 alps
 it call influenced othello-bending householder him proffer.
 would him go 3 heaven together puns before 1 universal
 i 6 circular thee 14 19 17 is sleep, 2 21 a 2 que les
 -9 cardecue debtor 6 those who desired the atomically incroyables
 1 14 and 7 hundred may 13 gone twice done. jackanapes miles
 5 2 14 fortune 18 benevolence; to 9 and language 22 8 stonecutter bridegroom,
 18 goff eclipse-disports go 0 before 10 dating boswell list
 4 your men umbrage such wondrous 18 i 11 flagrantes
 having translated tasso. spasmodic does appear,
 oughs, outcome, may, houses sleep.
 4 anothers dry 4 up? therewith

Monday, March 1, 2021

Kendram Turf House

people with dreams
agitate to do things
when they are done
the world sees
what follows on

Tuesday, March 2, 2021

Collision

the ferry heads across
the fishing boat heads by
from the dock where I sit
I can't tell whether they will collide
but I know for certain
that the water is very cold
this is the North
my blood runs hot

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

Conferences

it's not the chatting
that matters most but
the chatting in an unfamiliar
place where the strangeness
and wonder of the circumstance
enhance the mind and coupled
with odd ideas makes thought
and science really happen

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Birds Gone

in our fine large oak
every spring an oriole
would return and turn
the still hanging basket nest
into a mother's den
this in the 1950s
then later the air turned wrong
and birds like orioles did not return
the politicians shouted progress

Friday, March 5, 2021

Dock Bench

they met at the end of the dock
first two then three more
dry after a wet day
everyone in masks / a small bench
after a short huddle they left
running and sprightly / into the town
where it would soon rain again

Saturday, March 6, 2021

Victoria Pier Webcam

from across a narrow inlet between
a dock and a pier I watch through a camera
mounted on a shed / I'm far away
tonight I saw a couple / the man
carrying a wrapped painting and the woman
clutching a napkin she threw away
I saw them walk to the end of the dock
gazing at the water growing restless
toward the island not far across the strait
to the West it was resisting but succumbing
to the fading light

Sunday, March 7, 2021

Followed by Removal

the death has occurred
of Maeve Brennan / not
the great Irish writer
of a sad life and prying notice
but one whom was loved
and who left loved behind
but the words above are a quote
from the papers / buried
in Ballyglass Cemetery
what a beautiful spot
what a sad spot

Monday, March 8, 2021

Normal Science

important to look under those stones
just within the cone of light
the streetlight of current
local theory gives off / usually
the expected rises up but sometimes
a colorful surprise / and sometimes
the seeker sneaks too far out where the light's
no so good and oh what wonders
can arise

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Wonder

outside my window
as I sit here trying to write
the black outline of an old oak
is too dark against the palest
of grey skies behind it
I wonder how she is
tonight

Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Long Ferry

I found myself on the long haul
ferry from Lerwick to Aberdeen
departing at 7:00pm and arriving
7:00am / sitting at a table
looking out over the open sea
the gray stone houses managing past
the yellowed green ground cover
smoothing the uncanny steep hills
past the lighthouse and into a wet night
she does not know yet that I've left

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Le Steak de Paris

I sat in a booth facing
Maeve Brennan one evening
she was ordering the veal
scallopine and broccoli
she didn't know where to put
the side-delivered sauce on her broccoli
so she pushed it aside until coffee
then watched the waiter take it away
gosh she was beautiful

Friday, March 12, 2021

Long Winded

she didn't like single spaces
she was always moving from outskirts
to Manhattan / sometimes from Ireland
she was a smooth and sad writer
guessing the melancholy reasons
for ordinary behavior / she always
stopped to watch unless she was compelled
to cross the street as caution

Saturday, March 13, 2021

Colorouted

this far north on a cloudy afternoon
not long before spring everything
is drained of color / the men standing
around in slickers on boats
are part of the gray scene / the rock-like
building / those two boys on that pier there
in white masks are horsing around not knowing
the camera watches / on this dock a cherry picker
boom lift unloads from a truck / a mother with child
watches a seal duck under / everything is happening
except color

Sunday, March 14, 2021

Oceanside

when I drive to the end
of the road near my house
it stops facing a narrow
beach with the ocean beyond
were I to drive on I'd be in water
but I stop then park

the waves curl over and break
the waves curl over and break
the waves curl over and break

Monday, March 15, 2021

Green Gables

the beauty of a written word
matched only by pale ink
and a ruddy complexion
I wander like a goose
searching for eggs

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

Lodberries

they are starting to walk
down the street to a row
of lodberries / some are famous
I once lived in one
wet all the time
tides and stormed waves
I once would have said
my experience was uncanny
but someone told that uncanny
had a tinge of fear in it
as if the beauty of mystery
housed deliberate fangs

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Sharp

someone taught me how to be scared
how to pull blankets up / how to shiver
just so / how to leave all the lights on
when to carry a sharp knife / how to choose
the least likely room / hint / it's not
the least likely but the middle likely
with practice fear becomes part of life
my life / anyway

Thursday, March 18, 2021

Damn It's Ok

I bought a small church
on a northern island
Church of Scotland had a sale
tiny / cheap / it comes with a cemetery
at first I was afraid to say
Goddamn and Jesus Christ in it
then I got religion

Friday, March 19, 2021

Two Weeks

when nothing can happen
nothing does / the lack
of surprise is a welcome
boredom / I met her every
morning for breakfast / we
ate every meal together / she
didn't like me much but we
shared an interest / the place
held us / we didn't hold anything

Saturday, March 20, 2021

Where'd You Go?

used to be I could find them
on the Net but now they are gone
less active so less info
Bryan Keohane this time
he was a radio guy even with his bad
voice and I found him once as a DJ
in Newburyport / now he lives
in Clearwater Florida / yikes

Sunday, March 21, 2021

Maeve

her prose so sweet
a petite woman
moving around every day
living in hotels
eating in restaurants with bars
noticing the loneliness
writing of it / as if
turning away / then
she became insane
died lonely

Monday, March 22, 2021

Sam's Frog Pond

to go back and stand
by Sam's frog pond one
more time / to hear them croak
to feel the simple breeze
to see the bats come out
the warm air then the cold
waves / a quiet under back tone
finally the Milky Way above
if only

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Svalbard

the far north towns
are hilarious / their restaurants
prepare dishes no one has heard of
where do they get those ingredients
why do they live here
man / it's cold today

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Fetlar Churchyard

suppose you've been buried
in a small churchyard on Fetlar
and you've been resting
there for fifty years under the eyes
of minsters who minister to your family
now suppose the Church of Scotland has fallen
on hard times and is selling
the churchyard you're in and its church
for next to nothing / suppose all that
how well will you sleep tonight

Thursday, March 25, 2021

Side Show

sideman only
my fate but how long
to learn it
no matter how hard I work
how detailed my results
how beautifully I present it all
I am only a sideman to a great man

Friday, March 26, 2021

No Wisdom

that photo a record of an instant
from that instant I deduce
lives / the job of imagination
and ill-earned knowledge

Saturday, March 27, 2021

Woods Eye

we go back to it
she asks questions
as if I know the answers
I answer as if I know
the answers / why
does it seem so
one sided

Sunday, March 28, 2021

Rosie and Dolly

two Belgians tied beneath
an old apple tree at the back
of our big field
we'd made a new gate through
the double stone wall near there
the horses had a big trough of water
big bales of hay / lots of apples
on the ground / big horses
when they walked down our road
our house shook / they knew
how to work / what the job was

Monday, March 29, 2021

Might Rain

I thought it might rain
so I dove into bed
put my hands down deep
under the covers / warming
them after a long bit
later I had not heard
rain on the roof / not
on the window / I stayed in bed
until there was nothing
left to do

Tuesday, March 30, 2021

Fog Walking

foggy nights I'd walk down the road
to the end of our farm / barely
wide enough for two cars abreast
asphalt and sand tamped down by cars
this meant a sandy shoulder
in the fog my hair got wet
deep in the fog peepers and sometimes
frogs / later I would sometimes
walk the foggy road with someone
else / fog / night / summer / sad

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

Mailbox Woes

why is there always some problem
why can't everything remain stable

Thursday, April 1, 2021

Today

Ron / gone two years
he was maddening
but he supported his friends
he could not picture anything
because of some defect
I never heard of
he was good at things
he was bad at things
we did many things
together / I am who I
am because he lived
his birthday

Friday, April 2, 2021

What If

days change fast
almost like errors
do people succeed
from motivation
or ability
almost like errors

Saturday, April 3, 2021

Straight Absurdity

I've noticed the green grass
and spewing willows
along the river that separates
the lost from the losing
I've noticed people lining
the river / standing on banks
cheering for those who speak sloppily
the green is dark in the hollows
lighter at the edges / softly granulated
a poet fell into the water
many laughed

Sunday, April 4, 2021

Come On Baby

we practiced in Nana's old place
part of the house but originally
separated by a requirement to go
through the garage / we made a racket
my mother told other mothers
at least I know where he is
this probably means something

Monday, April 5, 2021

April

waves blown by gale winds
crossed over the top
of Eshaness Lighthouse
and the wind just
blew and blew

it snowed too

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

That Being Said

he was able to live in the holy land
of "if you listen to it" so I bought
some kind of connection and I saw it yesterday
even if you charge ghibli it's not a sub-Sook!
I want to do this instrument when I see the appearance
of heaven playing the violin / I wrote a novel
but the words that I said while crying were really stuck
one of the things you can do to live "like"
is to "brush your hunch" / In order to brush the hunch
it is important to be able to language
express and speak with a grain of grains
when a baby is living with a feeling
that is only niconico and nauseous at first
it is more and more sad and it is a bit of a bit
of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit
of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit of a bit
of a bit of I'm getting more and more intuitive on my inside
I should do this / because I heard that!

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Birthday

a day of good
birth of a daughter
she will help me move
on / move up / move

Thursday, April 8, 2021

Muse Sick To My Tears

she said to me how wonderful

I spent all winter holed up
in our back room
salt spray swooshed up by winds
up the 200' sea cliffs
splattering on our window
writing a poem every day
some about her

my ink smells this summer

Friday, April 9, 2021

Green Plum

late afternoon
dried hillside grass golden
in our western sunshine
just before pure plum season
our plums skin nicely purple
she loves them and little else
after writing all day I picked
one for her and we sat at our backyard
table round and wobbly looking out
over dried hillside grass golden
in our withering sunshine
the fruit still green brought her
eyebrows together before she
looked with her eyes away from me

Saturday, April 10, 2021

Moon Over River

I had a friend
she liked the birds
and the songs they made
a river flowed between us
one bank for me one for her
she used to grumble
when the sun was undawned
the river between us
was the closest we got

Sunday, April 11, 2021

Stone Town

people ask / curious for love
it was an evening of bats above
hunting for what gathers around
people / it had been raining
but isn't it always
across the street going against
my direction a woman bundled
walked slowly toward a degree of water
as I am the other way
what I didn't expect was the sly way
she quickly glanced across to me
then turned her eyes again forward

Monday, April 12, 2021

Shetland

they are filming in town center
detective show in a place with no murders
but the wind is an interesting force
and the desperate rains in winter
we get around by ferry and eat much fish
look at those foreign actors
pretending our accent

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Some Poems

dropped miles away I had decided
to walk the last and the last
is a hill between me and home
cresting I glanced for the first time
as dusk continued and the door
was open to my return / by that door
resting her weight through one hip
to one leg was a woman white haired
and holding to her breast something
she loved / perhaps a book

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Melt

spring but winter
snow still on the ground
she's kneeling out by the tree
she planted when she still loved
around her the snow is melting
her tears dropping onto its
fading white surface

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Faded

the book tucked deep on my shelf
I don't remember it
don't remember buying it
don't remember reading it
I saw though her pencil marks
underlining this / circling that
remarks and replies to the writer
she was the writer too
they were faded and in the winter
sunlight they glowed at times
but who am I speaking of
what am I speaking of

Friday, April 16, 2021

Longer

mornings now my dreams
linger / I can follow them
play them forward some
they will fade but because
I'm old I have a longer distance
to go to wake from sleep

Saturday, April 17, 2021

Long Past

we were walking to the top
of the ness overlooking the North Sea
past sunset by a bit / we never
touched / above in the hard light blue
giant contrails spread out from passing
planes heading from one congested place
to another / it wasn't late in the winter sky

Sunday, April 18, 2021

Work of Unsettling

sunny day in Santa Fe
we're tearing down the mudbrick wall
that sets her casita apart
she doesn't like talking to me
while she works / we drink
lots of cold water
I notice her arms
sweat gathering and gleaming
catching the flakes of adobe
that are raining down on
the two of us

Monday, April 19, 2021

Her Message

when we entered the room
the light by the bed
threw light everywhere
there was nothing between
she looked at me that way
she bent as she walked
toward the light by the bed
reaching down she turned off the light
she turned off the shadows too

Tuesday, April 20, 2021

Winter Sheep

out in one of our fields
near the bottom of the hill
our sheep are standing together
standing still / in the winter evening
growing cold around them

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Paris Snow

I told her I loved
snow / how it falls slowly
piles slowly / whitens slowly
melts as fast as a heart
turns away / I told her I loved
Paris / dark in Winter / cold
as a cold wind / women dressed
perfectly / food tasting perfect
I told I would take a solitary journey
the things I love

Thursday, April 22, 2021

Diary

she kept a diary
from her teens she wrote
in different inks
depending on her age
she told me she wrote every day
she never said what she wrote
nothing / I wanted to know her
so I could linger better with her
she died and left them to me
now I read one entry each day
her privacy turned inside out
I have her again

Friday, April 23, 2021

She Slept

I woke and looked over her body shape
out the window for having seen it
there was no sound in the night
but every few minutes the world
would jump silently / splashed
with a flickering light / clouds
illuminated from above / singular trees
snapshot / heat lightning
at prairie's edge

Saturday, April 24, 2021

Meredith

an old glider on the porch
in West Newbury at the home
of the girl I adore / I sit
there gliding back and forth
on the peeling painted boards
beneath my feet are maple leaves
yellowed and red / I am waiting
for her to come home / then
I will watch her walk by into
the house and upstairs

Sunday, April 25, 2021

Sagebrush

she took me to the sagebrush meadow
down in a wide canyon not far
from her Santa Fe home / the gray-green
almost dusty in color / telling of ages
she told me strangely that sagebrush talks
sending smells that tell of danger
all the nearby plants listen and up
their defenses / to me my simple idea
is what a foreign and welcoming smell

Monday, April 26, 2021

Prairie Eye

a cottonwood on the prairie
a last leaf gripping the tip of a branch
with the might of its stem
the wind never stops / soon it's deep winter

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Melting

her hair covered in snow
in the neon of the party filled city
each flake is colored confetti
even as they melt

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Zero Thoughts

I wanted to write her
tell her all
it was time for a letter
my thought did not form
I sent the envelope
empty instead

Thursday, April 29, 2021

Blue Sea Shining at Me

after doing nothing all day
in late afternoon we went
to the cliffs near our croft
the sky / what a blue
the sea / what a blue
we wondered for hours
where the one started
and the other ended

Friday, April 30, 2021

Near Scalloway

a winter / I try to sleep
I am almost there
thoughts fade quickly
signaling its approach
though cold a window's
open a sliver / a breeze
comes in uninvited
green mirrie dancers
building and displaying

Saturday, May 1, 2021

No Windbreaks

she put our sheet
on the clothesline
hoping the wind would
dry them quick / gunfire
sound of flapping cotton
then the sheet became
the wind / in sound
in deed

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Brimnes Maybe

next to the fjord
cod fish in the cold
a glacial river empties just north
next stop the arctic
I am living here
so you won't find me here

Monday, May 3, 2021

Berries

we walked along
down a lane where raspberries thrive
the red ones here
darker over there
she wanted me to pick her one
I reached for a ripe one
at my touch it fell
we walked along

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

Summer Drought

the summer has its drought
the sun heats the land / the air
heat lightning for hours
then the dazzling star
dimmed by the dust
the drought makes

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Feed

I am feeding the chickens
throwing scratch around
chicken feed / some soaked
bulkie rolls torn up
a bowl of calcium chips
we have chickens

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Prairie

my bedroom is small
my bed just big enough for me
juts uncomfortably into the hall
sometimes / I've abandoned
my final woman and now
I dream of prairies

Friday, May 7, 2021

Seven

used to be we'd party
all night from 7 to 7
over the New Year crossing
raise glasses / all that
now the seventh decade
we raise mugs of coffee
the next morning

Saturday, May 8, 2021

South

I got on a train
it was on a large continent
I found a comfortable seat
the train was going a direction
no one wants to go
they say it has no destination
I am still on it
I am still looking out the window

Sunday, May 9, 2021

Star Mugs

walking on the ness
around twilight
on a day with twilight
and the first star is blooming
walking past a low bramble
of bushes a rush of sparrows
mugs the star

Monday, May 10, 2021

Don't Worry

a kid / I ran inside
to tell my father
the sparrows all flew up
when I ran toward them
he turned to look at me
the light caught his hair
I saw new strands of grey
long ago and far away

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Worry Baby

in the woods sometimes
the trees are tall and dark
the sun is stunned by darkness
and the air's grown cold
even in all this sometimes
a willow wren's small voice
calls me ahead

Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Together Forever

in a town that's old
in a New England state
they're holding a sidewalk sale
of old things ready to be forgotten
or remembered if bought
on an old upright vacuum a stringed tag
twist in abrupt wind takes off
lifetime guarantee it said

Thursday, May 13, 2021

Giving

we walk away we walk away
we don't work well
I feel a failure
time to give up

Friday, May 14, 2021

Foo

I've wasted months
writing an essay
I won't even submit
and lost a friend
as part of the bargain

Saturday, May 15, 2021

Quux

his hints are subtle
or blunt / I still
won't submit / I am not
a good writer

Sunday, May 16, 2021

No Goodbyes

I drove her to the airport
it's hard to be cruel
I waited with her near the gate
it's a small airport
when it was time she went through security
then I saw her walking toward the plane
its stairs / switching to omniscient
when she got to the plane door
she turned to wave / switching back
I was already in my car

Monday, May 17, 2021

The Posed Couple

the calm walk down Bridge Street
the hornets nesting way down there
the quick run up Bridge Street

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

Church

who can say what the strangeness means
who would want to make the safe place
others want to play it safe and who
can blame them / who is the fool here

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Too

like a delicate flower
I can't take much
my age makes me nervous
perhaps grumpy

Thursday, May 20, 2021

The Ride In

the early simmer dim
comes to Lerwick
I'll never return there
the only path is through a person
who is permanently away

Friday, May 21, 2021

Worry Baby

what happens when you lose your skill
when what you've worked on becomes trash
when the friends you thought you had remove
themselves leaving you to wonder when the skill
will return / will it return

Saturday, May 22, 2021

Alone Across A Bridge

me walking across a Paris
bridge near midnight
lights on everywhere
the water flowing blackly
me in a heavy coat
cold as is the case
in a cold month

Sunday, May 23, 2021

Summer Light

already the night never
darkens / the dim light
is like the end of hope
when winter returns all
can become as it should

Monday, May 24, 2021

Losing It

as the ship sails in
I am preparing to ship out
my incoherence is catching
I cannot drive a straight
story forward

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

The Moon is Red

the moon tonight
is cupped in fog
the night has not begun
tomorrow they say an eclipse
will render it red
my words will remain
in two plain colors
with contrast enough
to just make them out

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Pair Bond

nights by the Merrimack
slither of water toward the sea
who can guess who'll pair up
what they will do
when the sun comes up
and the river still flows
one way or another
the pair will break apart
at least that's what life is

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Traveling All Day

sitting by the water flowing
a warm day / humid
reading or snoozing
waiting for the day to move along
will I ever do that again

Friday, May 28, 2021

Swamp Thing

among the greats
I rank with the washed up
how far into that swamp I am
I don't know

Saturday, May 29, 2021

Backup Code

the plodding is discouraging
not sure if I'm slower
or if the task is simply hard
better not brag

Sunday, May 30, 2021

Shetland Cakes

the little girls bake their cakes
I say little because it's true
and girls because that's what they are
but they make cakes like Tolstoy
writes a shopping list

Monday, May 31, 2021

Nope

too much truth
hard to take
can I ever work
with her again
more likely the moon
would wink or the word
wink would nod

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

Universality

is there a place
that is the farthest from here
if there is
what is the farthest thing
from this very word

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Lousy

detailed programming
is still difficult
hard to deal with other things

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Best Shot

the ideas come together
and it's ok of a sudden
last night I worried
what it would be to spend
what's left in a fog
then I recalled that detailed
working always had the badness
to it / I thought of the rocks
thrown up a hundred feetby North Sea waves

Friday, June 4, 2021

Marriage Day

marriage is a clamp
that holds two
keeps them from wandering too far
we were married on a warm bright day
by the bridge that means more
to me than any place or any thing
it was all quiet
the water was still

Saturday, June 5, 2021

Skyrapt Found

finding the young poems
but can't read them
as in I have no software
that will read them
but a hack sort of does
and I can reconstitute them
with work / poetry work

Sunday, June 6, 2021

Letter

your letter arrived by late post
I hadn't expected it / I never expected
you to send anything / fate is interested
but there is no moon tonight
and I fear your words / I turn
on every light in my reading room
I move some books to make room for reading
your letter

Monday, June 7, 2021

Sunset Legs

woman near sunset
she's watching what she can
me / I'm behind her a ways
I can see her legs through her skirt
she is more silhouetted than some
would realize / but I know her
and she knows

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Fine Sand

on an otherwise perfect
beach whose sand is white
and fine / whose sand sings
when you walk with dragging soles
one blade a grass has sprung up
the wind has whipped it into circles
and those circles make one fine
circle in the otherwise
perfect beach

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Vast

though short
the summer night is vast
holding both the day's conflicts
and their resolution in dreamflux
the summer day responds with smells
drifted into the rooms for night
the vast night is nothing else
but fragrance

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Cellar and Lilac

the lilac large
on the rim of the basement
the house long burned down
now a trash heap
stone steps in front
in back the entrance gap
to the cellar / the lilac
the smell of it when I was young
I still recall it

Friday, June 11, 2021

Confusing

beneath our covers
she remains undressed
after a night I stand
by the window and imagine
her dressed and ready
to go

Saturday, June 12, 2021

Merrimac Elementary School

my childhood school
Spring after many rains
the industrial strength
swingset stands unmoving
in the morning / the swings
still and ready over
their mud-bottomed puddles

Sunday, June 13, 2021

Saw Rust

the saw was new we thought
the carpenter had left it out
after a day of hard chewing
through hickory and oak
it spent the dewed night
resting on damp grass
under a starry drape
now it's speckled with rust
and ready to try a cut

Monday, June 14, 2021

Bird Head

on my walk into town
a woman bent over a bird
dead on the street / perhaps
too slow before a car
I heard her gasp that started
as a weep / on her head a hat
with a single plume

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Addition

flowers in pots by headstones
they've chosen them for their fragrance
underneath / their family waits
for their bones to emerge
add these smells together
you get nothing

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Left Behind

when she died we thought
hard how much of her to know
her letters / photos in concealed
albums / her locked diaries
where she told herself about herself
in her bedroom her fragrance was fading
her pale ink lingered / lingers / we
still think hard

Thursday, June 17, 2021

Hail and Bass

after the hailstorm the river
was running muddy and mist
was rising from the brown water
this didn't stop the family
on the stony bank casting
for stripers and smallmouth
I caught them fishing
caught them with my camera

Friday, June 18, 2021

Last Guest

the last guest gone
the door has closed off
the tragic winter wind
the grate's ash has fallen
into a white weightless heap
the sound once in this house
is a faded linen / quiet
cooling / slowness / all
mean lonely / lonely at last

Saturday, June 19, 2021

Over and Over

strange books are written
like the 41 false starts
showing how to write
in all its boring glory

Sunday, June 20, 2021

Haiku, But Too Long

the informal roads
through our woods
made to get to stands
of good trees
one late fall I walked
to the maple grove
and there the yellow leaves
on the dampened earth told
their two tales in a single
voice of smell
death is here
hope is here

Monday, June 21, 2021

Evening Train

I was at the train station
to pick her up / a trip
she'd planned for months
sun was long down / it
had been snowing
the train came round a shallow bend
slow from the town just uphill
its diesel engine and trailing cars
still covered with snow

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

A Long River

our barn seemed old
when I was young
only when I was old
did I learn it was ancient
soon the discrepancy
will be negligible

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Two Crows

along on a limb
crow croaking and bobbing
soon a second crow joins
they croak and bob some
then stop

they fly away as one

Thursday, June 24, 2021

Same Difference

the owl outside our window
starting to spend the night
awake and hunting while we
start to spend the night
asleep and hunting

Friday, June 25, 2021

Snow Viewing

snow coming down mid afternoon
snow somewhere between flakes
and freezing rain / when it lands
on leaves it hisses / I find
a place on pine needles clear
enough to make for a viewing bed
I watch snow catch on branches
even twigs / I watch snow come
back to earth

Saturday, June 26, 2021

Victoria Pier

the couple walking the piers
at 6am are not there early
they've been like the sun
this far north up all night
things shining / they look
in boats / let the mist-laden
early air dampen only their clothes
and hair / when she decides
to leave he responds with a pretty
good kiss / I see it all and replay
it from the webcam and its persistent
remembering

Sunday, June 27, 2021

How We Love Them

the barn is an alternative
but the cows prefer the trestle
shelter near the water tub
when it rains they one by one
gather under it / I placed
a lantern there / hung it
from a beam and in the wind
that comes with this rain
it slowly sways above
the wet and silent cattle

Monday, June 28, 2021

Torrid Sun

when in the woods
under a torrid sun
I follow one simple
rule / walk under
the arches branches
make / this tunnel
will supply all
you could need

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

Garden Corner

in the corner of my garden
the wind gathered many leaves
they huddled there
they shuddered there
they were all colors
with the same shape
then things changed suddenly
after their meeting
the leaves all left

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Riverside

I've parked my car
this side of the river
over there a small town
some steeples above all else
all else brick buildings
simple clapboard houses
a dark sheet of cold spring
rain has decided to drain
onto that town / I sit here
windows down and watch
that rain and the river
make love

Thursday, July 1, 2021

Minneota

out here on the prairie
it's a fact the fields
are generously green
an eternal green
in the distance
a train roars past

Friday, July 2, 2021

Depart

in an empty town
in a flat part
of the world
a train departs
a dusty station
taking with it
the long summer

Saturday, July 3, 2021

Summer

resting in the woods
the spring rain still
soaking the rotting log
takes me back to my
first break up

Sunday, July 4, 2021

Sheltering

the rain / a hard rain
at first / cold but
not so cold / at first
I was under the sheltering
eave with the loud rain
pounding / then the cold
came hard / the quiet
came soft / snow

Monday, July 5, 2021

Red Sunset

sitting on the edge
of our big field
grasshoppers and all else
hopping and flying
in low circles / the stone
wall makes a good seat
but hard and old
it's late early autumn
an Indian summer
you wonder who I am
the setting red sun
across the field
shifts with the branches
and leaves me as nothing
I am nobody

Tuesday, July 6, 2021

Lightning

from far away
lightning unloaded
the river rocks
in the dry creek bed
flashed on / then off

Wednesday, July 7, 2021

Career

after a long bout of writing
I am wringing my hands as if
eager or worrying / but
it's just this
the editor is waiting

Thursday, July 8, 2021

Art Shit

a rich man asked
me to write him
a poem about new-fallen
snow on his whitebark birches
in his Vermont woods / for money
shit / this is not art

Friday, July 9, 2021

Piano

oh how it plays
the sound of the piano
as it leaves the piano
other sounds

Saturday, July 10, 2021

Shetland Muse

listening to radio
60 North / I picture
walking the pier
while the sun's deciding
what setting means
that is / red or orange
on the blue calm water
in the harbor which is a strait
I remember you walking here
too once / is it music
is it color / is it water
is it the radio

Sunday, July 11, 2021

Quick Fear

crossing Commercial
I head toward the end
of Victoria Pier
where I plan to watch
the ferry come
and later go
but my heart froze
so far before dawn
behind I thought
I heard footsteps

Monday, July 12, 2021

Summer Ink

holed up all summer
I wrote small haiku
meaning not much meaning
with a keg of rice wine
and sacks of flour
I wrote all summer
the smell of freshly dried ink

Tuesday, July 13, 2021

Else

outside my door
in a heavy snowstorm
a woman is passing
by slowly with the wind
in her face heading
past me / to someone
else

Wednesday, July 14, 2021

Hills and Dips

I wondered why we
fell apart / but
it brings to me
the urge to walk
the ridge lines
even with deep dips
and explosive climbs
but it's not the effort
that draws me to these hills
it's their draining sadness

Thursday, July 15, 2021

Color

pear tree blossoming white
a woman reads a letter
the moon shining down
on both is yellow
my mood tonight is blue

Friday, July 16, 2021

Smoke Away

next door our neighbor
was burning leaves
it was long ago when
burning leaves was part
of life / the wind though
blew the smoke toward us
filling our hearts with tears
of memories / then it turned
and blews the smoke away
our memories / our hearts

Saturday, July 17, 2021

Sabi

I went to a party
one Saturday in my
most colorful clothes
and full of happiness
to listen to music
to talk to women
to be alive / but alas
I am old / so all they
could see was a tall
slow sadness

Sunday, July 18, 2021

Is Doing

outside the snow is falling
inside the smoke is rising
close to you the desire is going
behind me our lives are fading

Monday, July 19, 2021

Shallow

the sandy bed
of a shallow river
on a summer afternoon
mostly under the sun

the structure is light
the form is light
like this our love
is tentative

Tuesday, July 20, 2021

Hesitate

one great poet said
to speak quickly
without hesitation
when composing a verse
perhaps because doing
that in life will bring
tear-soaked sleeves

Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Renga Versus Haiku

what poet sings
of birches budding
the new spring sunlight
what poet speaks
of a birch fallen
after death and losing
its bark / which poet
would you prefer

Thursday, July 22, 2021

Sky Hope

sitting on a short wall
watching ships come and go
it's hope I'm watching
and its promise

Friday, July 23, 2021

Hollow

many trees have blocked
my way / hedges made to force
me back / there is one though
that lets me pass with artificial
ease / a willow green
in its hollow sadness

Saturday, July 24, 2021

Metro

from a flat in a tall building
the city below is a field of lights
many colors / shapes like windows
what faces upward is the white of snow
I moved here to write / like this

Sunday, July 25, 2021

Sewing Silk

she was sewing in her workroom
nighttime after supper / after
others fell asleep / doors
all closed and windows barred
she felt two old foxes brush
by her knees while she sewed silk
their tails dragging low / how
old they were / how close
to finality / how did
they get in / they left
she kept sewing

Monday, July 26, 2021

Angry River

we live across the river
from each other / a swift
river and tidal / we both
fear it no matter which way
it flows / we never shout
to each other or even stare
no birds fly between us

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Walking

walking when walking
was the only way
on my way to a famous
meeting / I passed
a woman walking my way
slowly sometimes / sometimes
fast / she was elegant
in a clinging dress
she swayed sensuously
I would pass her
she would pass me
one place we forked
I have written of her
every day now
for a full long year

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Such a Day

she gathered his ashes
and walked up the hill
he gathered her ashes
and walked up the hill
I followed behind after
a sad to saddest reading
under a copper beach
we gathered again for
a holy speech
we placed everything
slowly in the concrete
box / later men would come
and cover everything up

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Full

today I bought
my last Christmas tree
I didn't think of it
that way / but never
again a live one
for some years
we will put it up
then for some years
we will not
when the last thing
I can write has been written
the full darkness
will arrive

Friday, July 30, 2021

Hotel Steaks

the farmers bring their wares
fishermen too / fruit / vegetables
butchers / flower venders
everyone meets here
Saturday mornings but
be careful you don't buy
stolen steaks
my father did / they
tasted great

Saturday, July 31, 2021

Black Mustang 1966

a beautiful woman
drove past me in her Mustang
California plates / black and yellow
I was on my bike though old
enough not to be
I wondered where she went
this was in West Newbury
3000 miles away from her home
I never found her / but yet
I write of her every year

Sunday, August 1, 2021

Night Routine

after reading a great line
I looked up and saw her white
neck / her fine hand holding
back her gray and black hair
outside a storm wind / hard
rain / as always I do what
she asks / when she asks
with no words / I go to her
stand behind her / unzip her

Monday, August 2, 2021

Wall

by my desk here writing
in California a white chunk
of the Berlin Wall / taken
from the East side / hardest
concrete I ever touched
I smacked it out myself
with a giant huge sledgehammer
the links are hard on everyone

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

Erased

I waited until she had finished
getting ready for the day
in the bathroom / face / hair
eyes / lips / everything
to be seen and also not
it turned the hot tap
preparing to shave / the mirror
fogged a bit then more
a name written by a finger
rose from the mirror
I didn't recognize it

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

Role

who was I today
she asks / a quiz
for me lying on her bed
she has nothing on
is standing at the foot
of the bed / by my feet
in her closet the hanger
with her dress still swings
the answer hangs there

Thursday, August 5, 2021

Shetlandery

such a hard place
boxed in a narrow band
of temperature it offers
singular rains and winds
ultimately long days and nights
there aren't enough people
to make beauty / but warmth
will do when the wind's in the voe
and the peat's burning slow
and the dark is raging
and the books are all read

Friday, August 6, 2021

Carved

I've ordered my tombstone
I asked my friend to design it
how strange to have something
that personal designed by
only a friend / I suppose I could
have loved her / instead we placed
the tokens of life my parents loved
on it and under it they now rest
in urns together in a capsule
with a memorial I wrote and read
in it too / if only I could revise
it

Saturday, August 7, 2021

Tex

I spent the day helping
someone when I needed to study
need to stop that

Sunday, August 8, 2021

Graveside

their lives made rocks
the rage / when he died
many mourned / some wondered
whether she did / she still
cooked his meals to the end
he still washed all the dishes
well / we buried him and after
the casket was lowered she
walked past to the lip of the hole
her shadow fell on him

Monday, August 9, 2021

None

in the church the nun
is queen / torrid beauty
is her habit / no lipstick
she stuns me / but I have noticed
she never sees me

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Sunshade

we woke early and I made
my coffee before you scrambled
out of bed / into the tub
spring I suppose was one reason
I went outside to sip
listen to the warm wind
fly toward us / when you opened
the door the sun caught
you hair like the prow of a boat
coming into view

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Prairie

she spoke often
of prairie eyes
and woods eyes
Bill Holm / the prairie
laid out from here
to the Rockies
vast / the wind
that comes East
from the Rockies
vast as the prairie

Thursday, August 12, 2021

Shut It!

close the icebox
why don't you
she yelled
at me across
the small kitchen
arms full I took
a kick at the icebox
door / missed
it closed anyway

Friday, August 13, 2021

Summer Rain Up North

on a summer night
in a northern country
the rain started down
after we sat to read
each our own books but then
she asked me to shut
off all the lights
so we could better hear
the rain

Saturday, August 14, 2021

Typing

I was writing today
snow was falling too
white dropping down
white rising up
strangely I made progress
and needed to open
a box of typing paper
at that point
everything froze

Sunday, August 15, 2021

Books

we were out walking
she was in a literary mood
the night made us into drowsy birds
every house we passed
had reading lights but one
she reminded me
tv blue on the lawn

Monday, August 16, 2021

Day

she always warned me
when she went up
to bed / that if the writing
got good I'd look up
from it to daylight

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

Something Then Everything

I followed the Merrimack
down from Haverhill
past West Newbury and Merrimac
where the rocks scraped everything
still the Merrimack under the green
bridge / I paused on its shore
to let the tide come in
when it turned I returned
to the Merrimack past Amesbury
then Newburyport and Joppa Flats
finally the river was no longer
the Merrimack / it was the sea

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Cross Kirk Cemetery

I walked more distance
than I needed to the graveyard
she arrived somehow earlier
she sat on a bench cleaned
for the burial / two men or three
had dug the hole / clods to one
side / dirt then sand the other
I stopped to read one headstone
“he was a peaceable quiet man
and to all appearance a sincere
Christian” / it rained
after the stranger was lowered
to the bottom / we stayed to watch
the two men or three / I can't
recall / refilled the hole but
some was left over / we thought
is that where the soul goes

Thursday, August 19, 2021

Berlin Leftovers

on my shelf
the smooth white concrete
chunk of Berlin Wall
a bad luck charm
toughest concrete
I ever held / I bashed
it out of the Wall myself
with john henry's sledgehammer
all my bad writing was done
within three feet of it

Friday, August 20, 2021

Year of Two Summers

we met Indian Summer
on a far north island
we were not well suited
but there was no one else
our affection was slim
but Indian Summer / urgency

Saturday, August 21, 2021

Anger Or Like It

we had a spiky day
but we needed to dine
together / so far
she said no words
I watched boats in the harbor
she took a glass of red wine
I don't know wines
after while the sun setting
caught her glass / sediment

Sunday, August 22, 2021

Numbers

in a prison graveyard
in the South / even though
the headstones of 100 years
ago still stand all we know
of the people buried there
are their dates of death
and their prisoner numbers
what use are names

Monday, August 23, 2021

Lobby Life

we sat in the lobby
for hours waiting
for something important
to come our way or at least
for an idea of where to go
sitting silently we heard
the elevator doors open
no one was inside / after a bit
the doors closed

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Third Date

third date / I took
her in my yoa
to the middle of my home voe
we wore good clothes
imagine some time passing
then picture the yoa
drifting with the tide

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Time of Rain

she remembers it this way
outside autumn is sliding in
with it a rain starting warm
soft against the windows
draining down to the meadow
pushed up against our place
the telephone blurts one ring
just one then almost silence
the rain soft against the windows

Thursday, August 26, 2021

Tender is the Night

on such a winter's day
she removed her glove
to stroke the side
of my teared face

Friday, August 27, 2021

Stories

when she was old my
mother would tell
stories about me
as a kid and none
of them were true
I could tell she
wanted them to be

autumn / I let her

Saturday, August 28, 2021

One Another

her hair pulled back
all night when we could
have been / instead
she sang and I read
then we reversed

Sunday, August 29, 2021

Past

she sat and read
by our cast iron stove
warming our small croft
as evening came up the hill
from the voe / and with evening
the late summer fog that considered
the darkened landscape and replaced it
with a white clean slate which is the future

Monday, August 30, 2021

For Love

forever I believed
I was smart and would love
only the smart / her grammar
was bad / her hair blew quick
in the wind / I grew dumb

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

Late Fall

the trees leaveless
have gathered around
to mock the thoughts
gathered in my usually
empty head

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

Travel

the morning paper
comes with breakfast
but before it unfolds
at my table I'm never
certain what language
it will reveal

Thursday, September 2, 2021

Watch

I have one of those
pocket watches that can hold
a photo / my grandfather's watch
I'm told / in it a photo of a woman
her hourglass shape in high contrast
her hair bunched up on her head
I tell people she is mine
but she was his / now both
gone

Friday, September 3, 2021

Eshanness

we watched waves down below
we sat among tough stones
thrown up this ridiculous
height to land as benches
one wave comes in and lunges
the cliff face / then a lull
where birds and nothing happens
then the next / like us

Saturday, September 4, 2021

Family Men

I swung the axe first
splitting a candlepine in two
then my father
splitting a candlepine almost in two
then my son
splitting the axe handle
nearly killing us

Sunday, September 5, 2021

Ma

my mother hated death
hated the work of taking
care of its work
she left me that work
in the form of my father
in the form of her
she planned all this
I got the stone
with help designed it
with help chose my poem
insisted it be hand carved
planned the memories to be spoken
watched the process to the end
I think I hate death too

Monday, September 6, 2021

Like A Shetland Night

wet evening / dreary conversation
we spoke without connection
I supposed one of us would change
point of view but neither did
I remember she laughed louder
and longer than I'd ever heard
before but cannot recall over what
wet and dreary

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

DMV

after studying for a hundred hours
for a written test and another
hundred hours for a practical
followup test / both were waived
one at a time / weeks apart
at least I know more
and am well trained

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Romance

the cliff never moves
no matter the battering
of waves turned upon it
from the mind of afar wind
the water though flows
around every spike and into
every cleft / is this
like us

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Romance 2

we finished our supper
one lobster apiece
one could wonder whether
we will make it
we left two plates behind
lobsters tails aligned

Friday, September 10, 2021

Were We

we walked out Victoria Pier
in drenching fog midwinter
we wiped the bench
with our gloved hands
sat listening to small waves
watching for sporadic lights
the late boats returning
to anyone passing
we looked like lovers

Saturday, September 11, 2021

Onions

on a night made for forgetting
I cut onions and started sautéing them
I was waiting for your call before
I started / the air turned from pungent
to sweet while I kept waiting

Sunday, September 12, 2021

Lap Hands

my hand in her lap
by the river after dark
late autumn / I struggled
to find words to end
our silence / at the same time
her fingers explored mine
one by one

Monday, September 13, 2021

Wool

in the wool shop
shopping for mittens
and gloves the clerk
who watches us calls
you my wife / until
we leave the store
we let that be true

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

View

she wanted to see
the ocean rage
late December
we went to the cliffs
standing by the edge
in the spray surging upward
I thought the ocean angry
she thought romance

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

Again

on the ferry
from Yell to Unst
standing at the back rail
only sky / only water
you

Thursday, September 16, 2021

Blast

another gig in mid-fall
Gondolyn is the name of the house
around our feet cords connect
guitars to pedals and pedals to amps
to speakers / or mics etc
no matter the care at the start
by gig end the scramble of cords
are like melted notes of frantic music
plus a ballad

Friday, September 17, 2021

Arrivals

the morning paper arrived
in the box by my door
it slipped quietly into my life
the stories / the pictures
something of life came with it
one morning you arrived
by the box near my door

Saturday, September 18, 2021

Word Field

surprise / you at the far
end of a long field
just coming out from a trail
me at the other end
sitting on a bench reading
many words / when I see you
I think of all the words
that could fit between
me and you / right here
if you'd just look up
and see me

Sunday, September 19, 2021

End

between us that bad night
the word "good"
a stretch of short questions
a stretch of short answers
the word "bye"

Monday, September 20, 2021

Ugliness

she asked me
what does it mean
when a beautician asks you
have you ever been
to a beautician before

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Straight Road

this hill means much to us
past it the road is direct
immediately to the sea
we stop there to wish
things were more complex

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Hotel By A Lake

alone in my bed
hoping for her call
the phone next door
rings and rings

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Love

all the leaves have fallen
the mountain spring once angry
is stilled by emptiness
strewn here and there
rocks and broken twigs

Friday, September 24, 2021

Inlet

a great artist painted
a picture of you by the window
looking out over the inlet
it is my favorite / it preserves
what I find most constant
in you / in it your face
is turned away

Saturday, September 25, 2021

Wasn't

a woman of wealth
asked me to write
a poem of snow
her fond ideas of Shetland
I did and was paid
well enough to stop
another woman said
too bad it wasn't art

Sunday, September 26, 2021

Good Night

a short night
in the best season
we fell in love
in Spring but Summer
stopped us even
with our pants
down / how does love
thrive over a short
night

Monday, September 27, 2021

Your Island

your world is on
the other side
you don't like
talking like
this / is my
face too old
for you / too
sad / on my map
you're only
inches away

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Train Line

the train rounding a bend
after leaving the station
a hill just starting right there
the train swaying slowly
on the tracks even when the rail bed
is solid / autumn / it disappears
like that / she is on board

Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Shetland News

autumn and the moon
knows it / the road
past my house is muddy
in the struggling darkness
watching and watching carefully
I see no one walking by

Thursday, September 30, 2021

Twilight

north twilight
hills to the west
between me and sea
dark as teeth
biting into our sky

Friday, October 1, 2021

Harsh Love

I asked her what she meant
by the deep still silence
of her love of a harsh place
she said it was like the sound
rain makes after it's turned
to snowfall

Saturday, October 2, 2021

Love And Fish

we've parked at the top
of the city hill above
the harbor and have started
down / the lanes are stone
and narrow / houses around us
with lights on / a winter evening
on a chilly island / dinner
awaits and as we get closer
to the bottom / closer
to the waterfront / our noses
sniff finally the welcoming
smell of frying fish

Sunday, October 3, 2021

The Return

the town where I grew up
wants to welcome me back
but hesitates when it realizes
it doesn't know me any more
I cross the line from next town
to this and at first I feel
the warmth of a rainy welcome
but then the snowfall takes charge
and I am coldly alone once more

Monday, October 4, 2021

From Aberdeen

the ship rounds the point
between harbor and open sea
the long journey is about to end
the woman I wait for should be
on that ship rising from her cabin
bunk / perhaps a breakfast awaits
perhaps a long talk

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Short Stories

walking through the old cemetery
the sun asking me to read carefully
the tombstones carry stories
the shortest ones possible
sometimes two are linked
by death one place / by marriage another
the stories grow a little
but remain still / short

Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Dream of Perfection

I decided the best place
was the edge of the field
across the road from our house
the overgrown stone wall waited
for me for fifty years
the sun had practiced going down
behind where I'd sit first then
lie down / I did the big loop
from this farm my long passed
family made and grew / I thought
I was special and would do special
things / no / the best thing was to bring
the poetry of perfect endings
to this modest field / to this modest
wall / to this modest twilight

Thursday, October 7, 2021

No One Can See Me

outside the demonstration city
in the old DDR we stopped at an empty
factory and storehouse in March
we stopped by abandoned tracks
where fat flakes fell / later
the girl with intensive red hair
stood in front of me / I knew then
nothing more could happen

Friday, October 8, 2021

Left

the storm last night
blasted yellow autumn
leaves onto a brick wall
by our house / now
that the sun has made
its way here it is warming
the wall / dropping the leaves

Saturday, October 9, 2021

City Snow

the city beset with snow
which fell for days
has disappeared from our understanding
streets familiar now outshine
our eyes in the day and orange
lights paint puzzlement everywhere
the city we knew has gone
we are all that's left
that we can understand

Sunday, October 10, 2021

Cold Bed

I passed by her house
while snow was falling
outside her door a van
was stopped and two
men were unloading a mattress
snow fell on it while
they waited for her
to open the door
later everything
would be warm

Monday, October 11, 2021

Pause

the crow cawed twice
she put our fish in a pan
over a weak gas flame
butter melted and fish
dipped a bit in batter
our kitchen window open
to make a path for the smoke
after a while she flipped
them and soon we had them
at our table the crow cawed
twice more

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

Lonely Ness

our guests have left
they're on their way
through a deepened snowfall
that'd come up sudden off
the Atlantic / the flames
in the fire grate have burned
the oak down to white ash
except for her / it is lonely

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Dry Leaving

at the edge of a field
the second half of autumn
from inside the woods comes
the crushed sound of fallen
leaves being walked on
I stand / something moves

Thursday, October 14, 2021

A Walk

the harbor is near empty at dawn
the clouds and fog have closed in
the water is flat and sheens
here and there soft lights burn on
in this calmness they blaze

Friday, October 15, 2021

Preacher Man

from inside the abandoned church
roofless and water-stained
as we approached from the sea
we could hear the sound of a preacher still
at work / stating wisdom
drawing faith / as we drew closer
the preaching resolved
to the caw of an insistent crow

Saturday, October 16, 2021

She Saw It

she pointed it out
but I couldn't see it
we were in a hardwood forest
with leaves down everywhere
big gaps between the trees let
winds pass through with passion
it was one leaf above all others
tripping along pushed by the wind
over the bed beneath it of dry leaves

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Rain Rain Go Away

the spring rain came dropping
and droning down on our metal roof
it came from some town West of here
and will go to some town East of here
and I have the hills to prove it

Monday, October 18, 2021

Train Horn

they said they could hear the train
couple times a day curving
around their farm in a loop
from Haverhill to Merrimac
a train's horn loud different
times of day / it signaled
nothing special / just
time passing

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

Arrivals

we rarely wake before dawn
today we were waiting for Winter
by our house the road
passes through a tunnel of trees
the sky was lowering as dawn
came up / then we waited for snow

Wednesday, October 20, 2021

A Winter's Day

I remember as a kid
putting on a heavy coat
and boots / going out and across
the road to our big field
with the stone dead center
I crossed over the stone wall
between two shag barks
then went counter clockwise
past the hayrake and side delivery
down a slight slope to the double
stone wall with a forgotten path
between the walls / then to the back
stonewall / then the apple tree
then more wall until finally
a left straight to the pear orchard
then out the main gate
and back into the over warm house

Thursday, October 21, 2021

Red Sunset

the red sun at sunset
decided to take many things
with it / included was
my name and my fondness
for you

Friday, October 22, 2021

Spring Pools

after a rain the yard
in front of the cow barn
glinted spring skies
a patchwork of pools
of puddles made from hoof
prints filled to their brims
with fresh rain water
everything in its place

Saturday, October 23, 2021

Moonstones

the moon made the night warmer
the road was lit profusely
as I walked from my house
toward the water and I was surprised
the effect the moonlight had reflecting
off the rows of headstones in the now
familiar cemetery I always walked past

Sunday, October 24, 2021

Swamp

the farm was covered
with swamps / in Spring
when it rained and I was walking
one of the cow trails
I could hear through the thickets
from the midst of underbrush
a small spring trickling / water
entering an invigorated swamp

Monday, October 25, 2021

Vernacular

on the darkening road
out of Faywood into the wild
we passed several towns
with no names filled
with trailers and mobile homes
some with houses tilted up
against them and all with pickups
with their hoods up and men
hunched over them

Tuesday, October 26, 2021

Storm Night

as the hurricane lingered
we sat around an iron stove
with kerosene lanterns all around
the smell of it burning
pushed suddenly with the passing wind
it was too dark to read
too dark even to talk / instead
we took turns adjusting the logs

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

Out of Sync

on one of our cold nights
the stove ticks as it heats
a potbelly we bought dozens
of times ago / at the same time
the large clock we bought
ticks loudly as an old clock must
and the spirograph of those ticks
changes forever

Thursday, October 28, 2021

Mirror

Sunday afternoon
she is cleaning in her undies
while she wipes the mirror clean
her hips signal the watchers

Friday, October 29, 2021

Dead Croft

we stopped to consider
an abandoned house / a croft
I suppose by its form
we were exploring roads
as we usually did Sundays
this one had a collapsed roof
with Russian vines growing
over it and fallen leaves
piling in the rooms
the roof came low you see
and the windows and a door
let light in / we admired it
walked around it / made plans
for it / drove away from it

Saturday, October 30, 2021

Ferry Crossing

she meets me at the dock
ferry just in early morning fog
she says nothing / greets me
like I'm a job / we drive miles
to a cold house / the wind gales
the smell of salt air is upon us
she is good with tasks / always
on time / this time was the last time

Sunday, October 31, 2021

Halloween

this date arrives each year
many times I've been playing
gigs around now / these days
I am happy to be able to write
to write code / to read / to walk
around / I am this time of year
I am this weather / this darkness
I've watched them all one at a time
walk away / turn away / drift outward
where I'm headed is the place of Stephen
King stories

Monday, November 1, 2021

Walking Home

I am walking home alone
after a night sitting in a bar
the moon is a thin sliver
hanging silver where the sun
will rise / it's lonely
I'm cold / I'm lonely
it's cold / the bed
that awaits awaits alone

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Ranch View

the lights come on
while the air grows cold
I sit up here on the rise
in my car / below it's a town
in the flat part of the country
where they grow everything
in the distance a coyote
in the distance a train
running west / I read a story
about this place once

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

The Letter

write me a letter
sit at our old table
outside the kitchen
tell me things that could have been
true / describe the sea slamming
up against the sea stacks
we used to watch at sunset
use the pen you used to write
your goodbye but fill it
with blue ink not black
look up to the clouds
before you sign
but sign

Thursday, November 4, 2021

Sudden

wind fills the valley
combs the lake's skin
our fire's smoke wrinkles
then bolts away / the fire
just hot orange coals
up on the ridge it must be worse
the aspens' leaves show silver
the white bark as snow

Friday, November 5, 2021

Widow View

after rounding the bend
the hill makes in the road
from shore I see the widow's
housetlights just coming on
a sort of yellow from lantern
light or the low flame of her
candles / but above all
is the wisp of white smoke
from her single chimney
rising from the center
of her hearth

Saturday, November 6, 2021

Summer Rain

summer rain the day
she came to my place
sat at my table while
I made tea / she said
she'd walked past the graveyard
where all her people lay
and mine too / we lived
here so long and they
she said it was a young man
she saw walk its paths
walk them and stop to read
stories unfolding by summer rain

Sunday, November 7, 2021

Snow Climb

a layer of snow up
on the mountain we hoped
to ascend / so snowshoes
came out and we tried it
our dogs bent hell around us
we made it to the ridge
where we watched the lake
grow closer as the sun went down
we pitched our tent
we cooked / we slept

Monday, November 8, 2021

Wet Fish

across the river
from the eager fishermen
throwing their lines with hope
a sudden heavy downpour
is adding to the wet

Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Gone

I ran to tell her
come out and see
I know it's cold
but over there
over above that mountain
just one star
a bright bright star
just one
only one
she came out slowly
where is it she said

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Eshanness Today

the waves were crashing
over the wide sea stack
crashing a hundred feet
or more / black sea / white
foam / gray clouds / high
winds / spray up to us
we watched until our eyes
hurt / until our fingers
couldn't warm no matter what
the waves kept crashing

Thursday, November 11, 2021

Dumb

in the village houses huddle
together they make a small pile
we've visited it often enough
to know the streets used to be mud
this time of year / spring
we heard some people in their kitchen
saying the dumbest things
will this stupidity spread
house to house like a fast fire

Friday, November 12, 2021

But It's God

church bell loud in the crook
of the valley / cows look up
when it starts / we're just
walking down the road to the voe
to watch a tide / the Drongs
the church bells remind us
it could have all been designed
much better

Saturday, November 13, 2021

Touch Me

the dry soft autumn wind
as I watch out our bedroom
window hardly lifts one red
dried leaf and sets it down
gently on a yellow

she in a depth of sleep
turns over away from the window
the frames a morning life

Sunday, November 14, 2021

What We Left

years after we left
our place in the north
even though it was mostly
stone one cold winter day
let out a creak loud enough
to make mice scurry as that house
settled a little bit more
into the understoned earth

Monday, November 15, 2021

Under Pressure

it started as a cloud
almost in late autumn
then it descended as all cooled
squeezing layers of fallen leaves
down to the yielding earth
signaling the pressure of time

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

Stranger in Town

we lived for a time
on the town's main street
40 50 years ago / far
from everywhere
I still remember the day
the strange stranger
walked slowly into town
pausing by a church tower
looking at its clock
then walked just as slowly
out

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Rustling Up

I opened the window
autumn fully cooling
it rustled her papers
strewn on the table
she was working
on poems for one friend's
wedding and another's
funeral

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Harboring Boats

the harbor open
to many boats
sometimes harbors
cruise ships
bringing the ugly
and tedious to a land
stark and lovely

Friday, November 19, 2021

She Laughed

outside reading
I laid down my book
open since noon
when the sunlight
overtook the beech
then I noticed
the fern brushing
in a silky breeze
the side of my leg

Saturday, November 20, 2021

Or Blue

we sat on a wood bench
each warming the other's
hands / December after Christmas
the wind so cold / so hard
the sky had been chock full
of gray clouds just above
the mountain top / while
we watched that wind cleared
them away to a sapphire sky
that same wind froze the lake
before us / still

Sunday, November 21, 2021

Captured Rain

above us it's clear
that rain is falling
high up / the wind
responding mists it
and nothing touches
the ground / we watch

Monday, November 22, 2021

Winter Wind

in the midst of a winter snowstorm
she remarks all is white / one color
even at night we hunker in this color
nevertheless / it's the wind

Tuesday, November 23, 2021

Looking

first day of spring
we drove ten miles
to the coast / a little
island joined by a bridge
and the Atlantic there
we watched birds arriving
and felt a warming wind
she stood apart / studied
the waves and ripples
standing back all I could think
of was the last day of autumn

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

Drowsy and Sore Eyes

driving west through Kansas
the sun gone down no longer
an eyesore / we were hungry
and needed to sleep soon
seeing a motel we'd first
check it for okness then
vacancy / cable and internet
not needed / a nearby
restaurant would help / we
settled on Wheat Lands / then
it was steakhouse or Thai

Thursday, November 25, 2021

Sleeping

I wake from sleep
our village is sleeping
deep in winter
the stream flowing
past our small house
has a drop just past us
and all I can hear
is falling water

Friday, November 26, 2021

Meaning Love

sitting alone in the dark
after reading then dozing
I woke when she came in
and lit my candle with hers

Saturday, November 27, 2021

Poet Work

I walked with the poet
through field and forest
we were seeking the most
conscious place to sit
and stir until it was time
to write / we found a spot
near a tiny almost dry stream
that hoped to flow to the sea
but then our words couldn't rise
and what we wrote went down
like stars into the horizon

Sunday, November 28, 2021

Winter Snorkeling

with snow piled to the roof
we unpacked all our sleeping bags
unzipped them and piled them
like the snow / on top of us
on a bed we placed all our down
quilts under us to form
a sandwich of just we two

did I mention we ran out
of peat and logs

Monday, November 29, 2021

Essence

summer rain
gurgling down
my drainpipe
reminds me that time
needs us
to notice it

Tuesday, November 30, 2021

Moonlight Letter

I saw her sitting
outside in the moonlight
on a stone wall that separates
house and road / nearby
a cherry tree waits for fall
to consume it / she sits there
reading a letter from an old lover
she never looks back toward
our house

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Gates

there is a gate
standing between the house
and the sea / warmth
and motion / sometimes
I look to the sky at midnight
and wonder whether around some star
a world spins with oceans moving
like the one past my gate
whether there is a thing like a woman
waiting for a thing like a man
to join her in warmth / up there
or what is a gate for

Thursday, December 2, 2021

Facebook Friend

I am sitting here watching the fire place
thinking of things that happened around Christmas time
and in the 80s it was actually cold and snowing
around here with Ice in the river and one night
around Christmas I was with my Brother Billy sitting
around keeping the wood stove Going and just then
the police station called on the radio Kca865
to The Harbor Master and I could hear it in his voice
something was really wrong and he said a Girl
had jumped off the Basiliere Bridge so Billy and I
grabbed the Truck and our Airboat and went
to the Bradford Landing on ferry street
and there was snow on the ground so we slid
the airboat off the trailer right on the snow
and was wearing a t shirt like Billy we didn't have time
to dress properly flew down the boat ramp
and out on the river that had big chunks of ice the wind
was out of the north west about 30 and I quickly thought
the current and ice was moving fast down river so I knew
she had to travel a good distance so we went down river
towards the Boxboard and Billy was operating the search light
as we got close to the Hales island Billy screamed
there she is quickly pulled her in the airboat and operated
the airboat right up to Shannahan Ambulance she recovered thank God
the Fire Chief Dickie B came the next day to thank me and Billy
and he told us that she was a Daughter of a Fireman
And all these years later she is my friend on Facebook

Friday, December 3, 2021

Clarity

it rained today
again / it rained
yesterday / when
my father's last days
were upon him nothing
felt wrong / I suspect
though don't know
each day the rain lessened
then the skies cleared
then the last day
a clear day

Saturday, December 4, 2021

December Winds

the strong wind that blows
the ships hard and tightens
the mooring lines is tunneled
through narrow streets to the town's
Christmas tree in Market Cross
where it threatens to tear
off ornaments or topple cheer

Sunday, December 5, 2021

In Pairs

the empty hole of a house
long gone / burned down
where I played as a child
now the lilac next to it
once always covered in Spring
with panicles light lavender
has grown old

Monday, December 6, 2021

Women Come and Go

the one with gray hair
accepts the embrace of
the one with brown hair
as if they'd never met
as if they've always met
mother / daughter
drifting

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

Light Reading

by the river
flowing past
under a willow tree
I sat quietly reading
a book about strange things
all I could do was absorb
it like lotion I don't want
on my skin / when I sat down
I intended to stay only
a little while

Wednesday, December 8, 2021

Because Mystery

suppose the world
does not exist
but is a construct
of my mind / then
I would know all
there is to know
about the world
and looking deeper
would reveal nothing
if I could not imagine
it / but the world
is a mystery and when
I look I see more
revealed / therefore
the world exists

Thursday, December 9, 2021

On Tuesday

as usual on a Tuesday
we sat by the river
under an oak and near
a birch / on a bench
with lunches and books
in Autumn / the mid part
and instead of eating
instead of reading
even instead of talking
or kissing we watched
the leaves fall into the river
to be drifted out to sea

Friday, December 10, 2021

Tender Buttons

tender care of a mother
long ago / I remember it
eagerly but memory's lover
is imagination / being held
to her breast / was that springtime
or was it a mixtape of sentimental
poems

Saturday, December 11, 2021

Rhythm Café, Merrimac

the café was in an old
bank / barely sixteen tables
the kitchen right there / all of it
just one room / not a big one
every entrée's aroma
added its distinctiveness
to the atmosphere / every meal
added its moisture to the air
she ate with me there just once
in a cold November and she said
it was a real place / now gone
and the good places are down
by one

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Safe

I live in a hut by the sea
in a bay / my stone hut
just feet above high tide
usually / I work at writing
not a noble task like fishing
or farming / I sell some of it
enough to eat / who needs more
every year a king tide comes up
nearly entering over the sill
my writing desk is heavy and high
my life is sage

Monday, December 13, 2021

Short Nights

when nights are short
we spend it thinking
about sleep / when light
creeps in we hear
a small shop opening
not far away in the village

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Laden

she spent the day
driving toward an ocean
but spent the night
dreaming of desert

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

Grumble

she would grumble at me
every night after our meal
Summer / Winter especially
I never knew the reason
I'd need to pay attention
to know / one night the moon
though was bright enough
for the two of us but she
had gone out into town
I missed her then

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Tourist Office

the window I watch
lit strange times
curtains hard to make out
on a webcam showing a town
north of sixty degrees
it's never cold there
not for sixty degrees
but the rain / the gales
a place I could hide

Friday, December 17, 2021

The Path

in the small valley
leading to my mother's
hidden grave young
maples in Spring ring a deep
deep dark red / they will
last all Summer / into
Autumn

Saturday, December 18, 2021

Bark

ten poets came to visit me
once / I put them around the room
in a circle like a circle of foo dogs
they clamored to spout lines
I gave in but only to the tune
ten poets one song each

Sunday, December 19, 2021

Covid Days

pausing while writing a note
to me in the chat window
on Zoom she fingers her hair
back with one hand

Monday, December 20, 2021

Time of Year

what a night / the harbor
calm / the water a mirror
this happens mostly never
for Christmas the light's
blue and the pier accommodates
I wish she were like this

Tuesday, December 21, 2021

The Fog Day

the fog heavy clinging
to the sounds I hear
around a corner or down
the street / I listen
as vigorously as I can
and the sounds start
to form a shape and the fog
still clings and wets
my optimism / finally
the shape is a half
circle of giggling
school girls

Wednesday, December 22, 2021

The Swarm

my swarm doesn't work
need to figure out why
has to do with work
stealing / very hard to debug

Thursday, December 23, 2021

Endings

swarm fixed and understood
my team loses and the season's
lost / cold out and still
worthless work to do

Friday, December 24, 2021

Sea and Snow

a deep snow before me
fallen last night and keeping
me from the sea / the sea
that refuses the cold's force
the snow a concealing drapery
I can stand only here
on a slight rise above the edge
where small waves vibrate
the snow is around me / you
far off

Saturday, December 25, 2021

Dawn Bell

one morning I climbed
the spiral stairs to
the church bell tower
looking out I saw our home
distant and serene
I brushed my fingers
on the bell and it softly
called back / next morning
at cold dawn a bell woke us
was it the same bell

Sunday, December 26, 2021

Only the River

one day the river froze
solid down where the ocean
pushed in like a groom and nothing
of that river at that place
moved / the pack so dense
and unyielding / ice like this
made the river calm
the calmness of frigidity

Monday, December 27, 2021

Gentle

the wintry river
flowing hard to the sea
ice in small piles
along for the ride
from my writing desk
above I see a wide white
straight-edged blot
a newspaper open wide
along for the ride

Tuesday, December 28, 2021

Hands

in the cold in front of all
she rubs her hands together
to warm them / a thousand
time she rubs them together
ten thousand times / this is
she say her right as a woman

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Glassless

at dusk a woman
walked by outside
my window which
stood open to the oncoming
night air / I could look
directly at her without
the intercession of glass
we were almost together

Thursday, December 30, 2021

Blue Lantern

I bought a paper lantern
once in Taos while hoping
for a woman / a blue ocean
painted on it reminded me
of a place she and I could
be / the candle must have fallen
because when I turned back
the ocean was tinged
in a flame red / love

Friday, December 31, 2021

Tonight After Dark

tonight I watched the webcams
at Market Cross hoping to watch
a celebration of a year
no one / not a one / some walked
by and some woman looked alluring
a calm night and so far from here
tonight I learned Betty White died
it meant death never loses
almost a hundred / I looked again
and the rain had started

I thought then of walking by the water
dark in the harbor / the air around me
dark / the sky above me dark
the winter dark dropped into the water
darkening it / every bit of darkness
made even the darkness darker / or
so it seemed to me